

THE CALVINISM Of CALVIN

David Clarke

Calvin's Calvinism

By David Clarke

The following article was compiled to answer a question posed by a visitor to the Baptist church I attended for a number of years regarding Calvinism. The question put to the church was whether it subscribed to the doctrine of predestination as expressed by John Calvin in Institutes of the Christian Religion.

The visitor found the idea that people were chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world unacceptable.

I chose to remain silent at the time because I knew that my personal view on the subject differed from the church's stance.

However, I was amused by the visitor's response when I mentioned that the Baptists were a "broad church." His retort was to compare the Baptists to the Church of England, asserting that its broadness had led to its downfall.

I took the opportunity to review Calvin's Institutes, particularly Book 3, Chapter 21. I also explored references to Martin Luther, Augustine's debate with Pelagius, the Articles of the Church of England, the First London Baptist Confession of Faith, and the Articles of Religion of the Berton Strict Baptists—the church I joined in 1976. All of these sources align with my personal belief in predestination as taught by Calvin and other Reformers. I then further recommended Dr. John Gill's sermon, *The Doctrine of Predestination Stated and Set in the Scripture Light*, and enclosed the relevant references at the end of this document.

Preterist CBV vs. IBV debate

Upon examining the Reformers' views on predestination, I have confirmed my belief that a proper understanding of Adam's fall and death is essential to teaching the necessity of Christ's atoning death for the salvation of His church. The Preterist debate between CBV and IBV regarding the nature of the resurrection parallels the historical debate between Augustine and Pelagius, as it hinges on a correct understanding of the death Adam was threatened with and experienced on the day he ate the forbidden fruit.

I hope you will appreciate this article

THE INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Relating to Predestination

In the Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin extensively discusses the doctrine of predestination, including the idea that certain individuals are chosen in Christ for salvation before the foundation of the world. This concept is central to his theology and is particularly elaborated upon in Book III, Chapter 21, titled “Of the Eternal Election, by Which God Has Predestined Some to Salvation, and Others to Destruction.”

Calvin argues that God, in His sovereign will, elected some people to eternal life and others not before the creation of the world, not based on any foreseen merit or action on their part, but purely according to His divine purpose and grace. He roots this in passages like Ephesians 1:4-5, where Paul writes that God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”

Calvin emphasizes that this election is grounded in Christ as the mediator and head of the elect. He writes that God’s choice is not arbitrary but is tied to His eternal plan of redemption through Christ. The elect are loved with an everlasting love and predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ and to receive salvation, while those not chosen (the reprobate) are left in their sin to face divine justice. This doctrine, for Calvin, underscores God’s absolute sovereignty and the unmerited nature of grace, rejecting any notion that human works could influence God’s eternal decree.

Here are some specific quotes from John Calvin’s The Institutes of the Christian Religion (Book III, Chapter 21 and related sections) where he addresses predestination and the notion of being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world for salvation. These are drawn from the 1559 edition, typically translated by scholars like Henry Beveridge or Ford Lewis Battles, and they reflect Calvin’s core arguments:

On God’s Eternal Election Before Creation:

“We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand,

it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and irreproachable, but incomprehensible judgment.”

(Book III, Chapter 21, Section 7)

Here, Calvin establishes that God’s choice of the elect is eternal, predating the world, and based solely on His mercy, not human merit.

Chosen in Christ Before the Foundation of the World:

“Paul teaches that the grace bestowed on us was not of yesterday, nor had its origin in our time, but is eternal, because we were predestined and elected in Christ before the world began. Hence it follows that this grace was prepared for us before we sought it, yes, before we were born, or the world itself existed.”

(Commentary on Ephesians 1:4, cross-referenced in Institutes, Book III, Chapter 22, Section 1)

While this is partly from his commentary, Calvin ties it into The Institutes, emphasizing that election in Christ predates creation, aligning with Ephesians 1:4.

Christ as the Foundation of Election:

“God has chosen us in Christ, and in such a way that all the benefits of salvation are deposited in him as in a treasury; nor can they be conferred upon us except through his mediation.”

(Book III, Chapter 24, Section 1)

Calvin stresses that the elect are chosen in Christ, making Him the mediator and ground of their salvation, decreed before time.

The Eternal Decree and Sovereignty:

“The decree, I admit, is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, and foreknew it because he had so ordained by his decree... By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man.”

(Book III, Chapter 21, Section 5)

This underscores the pre-temporal nature of God’s decision, encompassing both the elect and the reprobate.

These quotes highlight Calvin’s view that predestination is an eternal act

of God, with the elect chosen in Christ before the world's foundation, solely by divine mercy and purpose.

Martin Luther also addressed predestination in his theological writings, though his treatment of it differs in tone and emphasis from John Calvin's.

While Luther affirmed the doctrine, he was less systematic and more pastoral in his approach, focusing on its implications for faith rather than constructing an elaborate framework as Calvin did in *The Institutes*. Luther's most detailed discussion of predestination appears in his 1525 work *The Bondage of the Will* (*De Servo Arbitrio*), written in response to Erasmus's defense of free will. Below are some specific quotes and insights into Luther's view, particularly regarding God's election and the idea of being chosen before the foundation of the world.

LUTHER'S VIEW ON PREDESTINATION

Luther believed that human beings, due to the Fall, lack free will in spiritual matters and are entirely dependent on God's grace for salvation. He saw predestination as a comforting doctrine, assuring believers that their salvation rests in God's hands, not their own frail efforts. Unlike Calvin, who emphasized God's eternal decree for both the elect and the reprobate (double predestination), Luther focused primarily on the election of the saved and was more reluctant to speculate about the fate of the damned.

THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL Martin Luther

Here are some key quotes from *The Bondage of the Will* (translated by J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston, among others):

God's Foreknowledge and Election:

"God foreknows nothing contingently, but... He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable, eternal and infallible will. This bombshell knocks 'free-will' flat, and utterly shatters it."

(Section: "The Sovereignty of God")

Luther argues that God's will is sovereign and eternal, predetermining all things, including who will be saved. This implies an election that precedes human existence.

Salvation by God's Will Alone:

"If God works in us, the will is changed, and being gently breathed

upon by the Spirit of God, it again wills and acts from pure willingness and inclination... But if God does not work in us, the will remains evil, captive, and unwilling.”

(Section: “The Will’s Bondage”)

While not explicitly mentioning “before the foundation of the world” here, Luther ties salvation to God’s eternal action, suggesting that the elect are chosen by divine initiative, not human merit.

The Comfort of Predestination:

“This is the highest degree of faith—to believe that He is merciful, who saves so few and damns so many; to believe Him just, who by His own will makes us necessarily damnable... Here, then, is the place for us to adore, not to dispute.”

(Section: “God’s Hidden Will”)

Luther acknowledges God’s eternal will in election but urges believers to trust rather than question it. He avoids delving deeply into the reprobate’s fate, focusing instead on the assurance for the elect.

Chosen in Christ (Implied):

Luther doesn’t explicitly quote Ephesians 1:4 (“chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world”) as often as Calvin, but he alludes to it elsewhere, such as in his Lectures on Romans (1515–1516):

“For God does not justify us because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace, which He determined before we were born, yes, even before the world was made.”

(Commentary on Romans 9)

This mirrors the Pauline idea of pre-temporal election in Christ, though Luther frames it more as a pastoral encouragement than a doctrinal cornerstone.

Differences from Calvin

Focus: Luther’s emphasis is on the bondage of the human will and God’s grace as the sole cause of salvation, rather than a detailed exposition of double predestination. He rarely speculates about the reprobate’s eternal decree, calling such matters part of God’s “hidden will” (*voluntas abscondita*), which

humans should not pry into.

Tone: Luther presents predestination as a source of comfort for believers, assuring them that their salvation is secure in God's hands. Calvin, by contrast, systematizes it as a demonstration of God's sovereignty and justice.

Scriptural Basis: Both draw on Romans 8–9 and Ephesians 1, but Luther leans heavily on the practical implications (e.g., faith alone) rather than a cosmic timeline.

Summary

Luther does affirm predestination and the idea that God chooses the elect for salvation before the world's foundation, rooted in His eternal will and grace through Christ. However, his treatment is less speculative and more focused on assuring believers of God's mercy. If you'd like more from Luther's other works (like his sermons or commentaries) or a comparison with Calvin, let me know!

CALVIN VS. LUTHER

John Calvin and Martin Luther both championed the doctrine of predestination, affirming that God sovereignly chooses the elect for salvation, but their approaches, emphases, and theological frameworks reveal significant differences. Below, I'll outline the key distinctions between Calvin and Luther on predestination, drawing from Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and Luther's *The Bondage of the Will*, among other works, while keeping it natural and concise.

1. Scope of Predestination

Calvin: Embraces double predestination. He explicitly teaches that God not only predestines some to salvation (the elect) but also others to damnation (the reprobate). This is an active decree of God's will for both groups, determined before the foundation of the world.

Quote: "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation." (*Institutes*, Book III, Chapter 21, Section 5)

Luther

Luther: Focuses primarily on the election of the saved and is less

definitive about the reprobate. He acknowledges God's foreknowledge and will in damning some, but he avoids systematizing reprobation as an active decree, calling it part of God's "hidden will" that humans shouldn't probe too deeply.

Quote: "This is the highest degree of faith—to believe Him just, who by His own will makes us necessarily damnable... Here, then, is the place for us to adore, not to dispute." (Bondage of the Will, Section: "God's Hidden Will")

2. Emphasis and Purpose

Calvin: Systematic and doctrinal. Calvin treats predestination as a central pillar of theology, demonstrating God's absolute sovereignty and glory. He aims to explain how God's eternal plan encompasses all humanity, tying election to Christ as the mediator.

Quote: "God has chosen us in Christ... all the benefits of salvation are deposited in him as in a treasury." (Institutes, Book III, Chapter 24, Section 1)

It's about order and clarity in understanding God's justice and mercy.

Luther: Pastoral and practical. Luther emphasizes predestination to comfort believers, assuring them that salvation depends entirely on God's grace, not their own works or will. He's less concerned with mapping out the mechanics of reprobation.

Quote: "God foreknows nothing contingently... This bombshell knocks 'free-will' flat." (Bondage of the Will, Section: "The Sovereignty of God")

For Luther, it's about crushing reliance on self and fostering trust in God.

3. Treatment of Free Will

Calvin: Denies free will in spiritual matters comprehensively, arguing that fallen humans are totally depraved and incapable of choosing God without divine intervention. Predestination flows logically from this, with God's choice being the sole determinant of salvation or damnation.

Quote: "Man's will is not free, since it is subject to the bondage of sin... God alone works salvation in us." (Institutes, Book II, Chapter 2, Section 6)

Luther: Similarly rejects free will in salvation, famously arguing that the

will is “bound” (servo arbitrio), but his focus is narrower—aimed at refuting Erasmus and affirming grace alone. He doesn’t extend this as systematically into a cosmic decree as Calvin does.

Quote: “If God does not work in us, the will remains evil, captive, and unwilling.” (Bondage of the Will, Section: “The Will’s Bondage”)

4. Role of Christ

Calvin: Explicitly ties election to Christ as the eternal mediator. The elect are chosen in Christ before the world began, and salvation is executed through Him as part of God’s unified redemptive plan.

Quote: “We were predestined and elected in Christ before the world began.” (Institutes, Book III, Chapter 22, Section 1, referencing Ephesians 1:4)

Luther: Agrees that salvation comes through Christ but doesn’t emphasize Christ’s role in the eternal decree as systematically. His focus is more on Christ’s work on the cross and its appropriation by faith, with predestination as a backdrop.

Quote: “God does not justify us because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace.” (Lectures on Romans, Romans 9)

5. Tone and Accessibility

Calvin: Analytical and precise. His discussion is detailed, structured, and aimed at theologians or educated readers, seeking to resolve apparent contradictions (e.g., God’s justice vs. reprobation).

Example: He spends multiple chapters in *The Institutes* unpacking predestination’s implications.

Luther: Polemical and earthy. His writing is passionate, aimed at believers and opponents alike, often urging humble acceptance over intellectual dissection.

Example: He calls God’s will a “thunderbolt” and tells readers to “leave the secret things to God.”

6. Speculation on God’s Will

Calvin: Willing to explore the “why” behind God’s decrees, though he admits they’re ultimately mysterious. He justifies reprobation as part of

God's glory and justice.

Quote: "The decree is dreadful... yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be." (Institutes, Book III, Chapter 21, Section 5)

Luther: Cautions against prying into God's hidden will (*voluntas abscondita*). He prefers to focus on the "revealed will" in Christ, discouraging speculation about the reprobate's fate.

Quote: "We must leave that majesty alone... and cling to the Word, where He reveals Himself." (Bondage of the Will)

Summary

Calvin: Double predestination, systematic, Christ-centered, sovereignty-focused, and speculative within limits.

Luther: Single predestination (election-focused), pastoral, faith-centered, and restrained about God's hidden will.

Both affirm that God chooses the elect in Christ before the world's foundation, but Calvin builds a broader, more detailed theology, while Luther keeps it personal and practical.

AUGUSTINE'S PREDESTINATION

Augustine of Hippo, a towering figure in early Christian theology, significantly shaped the doctrine of predestination long before Luther and Calvin. His views, developed in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, particularly during his disputes with the Pelagians, laid the groundwork for later Reformation thinkers. Augustine's understanding of predestination centers on God's sovereign grace, human inability due to original sin, and the election of some to salvation before the foundation of the world. His key works on this topic include *On the Predestination of the Saints* (*De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*), *On the Gift of Perseverance* (*De Dono Perseverantiae*), and parts of *The City of God* and *Enchiridion*.

AUGUSTINE'S VIEW ON PREDESTINATION

Augustine argued that humanity, fallen in Adam, is utterly incapable of choosing God or meriting salvation due to original sin. Salvation, therefore, depends entirely on God's unmerited grace, which He bestows on those He

has predestined to eternal life. This election, Augustine insists, is not based on foreseen faith or works but on God's eternal, sovereign will, determined before creation.

THE CITY OF GOD, by Augustine

Augustine deals with the Fall of Man and its effects primarily in *The City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*), particularly in Books 12–14. In these sections, he explores the origins of sin, the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience, and the corruption of human nature due to original sin.

Additionally, he discusses the topic in *On Nature and Grace* (*De Natura et Gratia*), where he critiques the Pelagian view of human nature and argues that humanity is entirely dependent on God's grace for salvation.

In Books 12 through 14 of *The City of God*, Augustine delves into the origins of evil, the fall of man, and its profound effects on human nature. Here's a breakdown of the key discussions in these books:

Book 12: The Origin of Evil

Augustine examines the nature of angels and the emergence of evil wills. He posits that all angels were created good, but some turned evil by their own free will. This misuse of free will led to a division between the good and bad angels, laying the groundwork for the two cities: the City of God and the Earthly City. This exploration sets the stage for understanding human disobedience and the origin of evil.

Book 13: The Consequences of Sin

In this book, Augustine discusses the repercussions of Adam and Eve's transgression. He asserts that death entered the world as a direct result of their sin, affecting all of humanity. This mortality is not just physical but also spiritual, signifying a separation from God. Augustine emphasizes that human nature became corrupted, leading to a propensity towards sin inherited by all descendants of Adam.

Book 14: The Nature of Sin and Human Will

Augustine delves deeper into the nature of sin, focusing on the disordered desires and the concept of concupiscence (strong sexual desire or lust). He explains that, before the fall, human will was perfectly aligned with God's will. However, post-fall, humans experience internal conflict and shame, especially related to bodily desires. This disordered state is a direct consequence of the original act of disobedience.

Here are some specific quotes from Augustine's writings (translations typically from works like those by Philip Schaff or modern editions):

Election Before the Foundation of the World:

"For not only has God given us our ability and helps it, but He even works in us both to will and to do... This grace of God, therefore, by which the elect are saved, was given to them before the world was made."

(On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 10)

Augustine ties predestination to God's pre-temporal decree, echoing Ephesians 1:4, where the elect are chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world."

Sovereign Grace, Not Human Merit:

"What merit, then, has man before grace, by which merit he might receive grace, when our every good merit is produced in us only by grace, and when God, in crowning our merits, crowns nothing else but His own gifts?"

(On Grace and Free Will, Chapter 15)

He rejects any idea that God's choice is based on foreseen human action, emphasizing that election is purely God's initiative.

God's Will Determines Salvation:

"God has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens... The purpose of God according to election stands not of works, but of Him who calls."

(Enchiridion, Chapter 98, referencing Romans 9:15-18)

Augustine underscores God's absolute sovereignty, interpreting Romans 9 to mean that God predestines some to salvation and leaves others in their sin.

The Elect and the Non-Elect:

"Why He does not give [grace] to all, I confess, is a question I cannot answer... For it is better for us to be ignorant of the reason why some are predestined to life and others not, than to know it erroneously."

(On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 8)

Unlike Calvin's double predestination, Augustine doesn't fully systematize reprobation as an active decree but acknowledges that God chooses to save some and not others, leaving the "why" a mystery.

Christ and the Elect:

"The Savior Himself, the Mediator between God and man, was predestined... and those who are saved are saved in Him, who was predestined to be the head of the Church."

(On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 24)

Augustine connects predestination to Christ, seeing the elect as united to Him in God's eternal plan, though he doesn't elaborate as systematically as Calvin.

Key Features of Augustine's Predestination

Original Sin and Total Inability: Humanity's will is enslaved to sin, and only God's grace can liberate it. Predestination is necessary because humans cannot turn to God on their own.

Single Predestination: Augustine focuses on the election of the saved to eternal life, not an explicit decree of damnation for the reprobate. He suggests God "passes over" the non-elect, allowing them to remain in their fallen state, rather than actively predestining them to hell.

Grace as Gift: Election is unmerited, and even faith and perseverance are gifts God grants to the elect, not responses they generate.

Mystery of Reprobation: He avoids speculating deeply on why some are not chosen, urging humility before God's inscrutable will.

PELAGIUS VS. AUGUSTINE

Pelagius's emphasis on free will directly challenged Augustine's theology, leading to a bitter dispute:

Human Nature: Pelagius denied original sin's crippling effect, asserting that humans are born with the same moral freedom Adam had before the Fall. Augustine countered that Adam's sin corrupted all humanity, rendering the will incapable of choosing God without grace.

Role of Grace: For Pelagius, grace facilitates moral striving but isn't the sole cause of salvation—human effort is primary. Augustine insisted that grace is both the initiator and sustainer of salvation, irresistibly bestowed on the elect.

Predestination: Pelagius rejected predestination as Augustine understood it, arguing that it undermines free will and moral accountability. He believed God's foreknowledge of human choices doesn't equate to divine causation. Augustine, however, saw predestination as God's sovereign choice of the elect before creation, independent of their actions.

Key Differences in Context

Moral Responsibility: Pelagius aimed to uphold human accountability, fearing that Augustine's view excused sin by blaming it on a fallen nature. He wanted to motivate Christians to live virtuously.

Practical Theology: His teachings appealed to ascetic circles in Rome, emphasizing personal discipline. Augustine saw this as diminishing God's glory and the necessity of Christ's redemptive work.

LEGACY AND CONDEMNATION

Pelagius's ideas were condemned at the Council of Carthage (418 CE) and later at Ephesus (431 CE), largely due to Augustine's influence. His opponents, including Augustine, Jerome, and Orosius, accused him of denying the need for divine grace, though Pelagius himself claimed he never rejected grace entirely—just its absolute necessity. What survives of his thought (e.g., *Commentary on Romans*, *Letter to Demetrias*) shows a focus on human potential that clashed with the growing consensus on human dependence on God.

Summary

Pelagius championed free will as the cornerstone of human morality, arguing that people can choose good, obey God, and earn salvation without being predetermined by divine decree or hindered by inherited sin. This put him at odds with Augustine's predestination, which emphasized God's sovereign grace over a fallen humanity. While Pelagius's original voice is muffled by history, his ideas remain a foil to Augustine's, influencing later debates, including those between Luther and Erasmus.

INFLUENCE ON LUTHER AND CALVIN

Luther: Drew heavily on Augustine's emphasis on grace alone and the bondage of the will. In *The Bondage of the Will*, Luther praises Augustine as the one who "alone among the Fathers" rightly understood human inability and divine sovereignty.

Calvin: Built on Augustine's foundation but took it further with double predestination and a more systematic explanation of God's decrees for both the elect and reprobate. Calvin frequently cites Augustine in *The Institutes* to bolster his arguments. To summaries;

Augustine's predestination is about God's sovereign, pre-temporal choice to save some through Christ, rooted in grace alone and not human merit. He affirms the elect are chosen before the world's foundation but leaves reprobation less defined, focusing on the mystery of God's will. His ideas directly inspired both Luther's pastoral assurance and Calvin's doctrinal precision, though each adapted them to their own contexts.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND ARTICLES

The Church of England addresses the subject of predestination in Article 17 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. Titled "Of Predestination and Election," this article is the longest and most detailed of the set, reflecting its significance during the English Reformation. It was formalized in 1571 under Queen Elizabeth I and remains a key statement of Anglican doctrine.

Article 17 states that "Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." It goes on to describe how the elect are called by God's Spirit, justified freely, and led to eternal life through grace, emphasizing that this doctrine offers "sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort" to the godly while warning that it can be a "most dangerous downfall" for the "curious and carnal" who misuse it.

Notably, the article focuses on predestination to life (election) and avoids explicitly affirming or denying reprobation (predestination to damnation), leaving room for varied interpretations within Anglicanism. This reflects its Augustinian roots, tempered by a pastoral concern to avoid divisive

speculation, a balance shaped by figures like Thomas Cranmer. So, if you're looking for the Church of England's take on predestination, Article 17 is where it's at!

THE FIRST LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION

In the First London Baptist Confession of Faith (1644, revised 1646), predestination is addressed most directly in Article 5. This confession, drafted by Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists in London, reflects their Reformed theology, including a strong affirmation of God's sovereign election. While the document doesn't use the term "predestination" verbatim in Article 5, it clearly articulates the concept of God's eternal decree to choose some for salvation through Christ, a hallmark of predestinarian thought.

Here's the relevant text from Article 5 (1646 edition):

"God in His infinite power and wisdom, doth dispose all things to the end for which they were created; that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance, or without His providence; and that whatsoever befalls to the elect, is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good."

This asserts God's sovereign control over all events, including the salvation of the elect, implying a preordained plan established before creation.

Additionally, Article 21 touches on the atonement's scope, which ties into predestination:

"That Jesus Christ by His death did bring forth salvation and reconciliation only for the elect, which were those which God the Father gave Him; and that the Gospel which is to be preached to all men as the ground of faith, is, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God..."

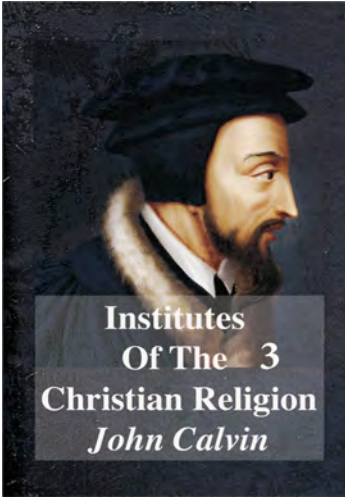
This reflects the Particular Baptist belief in a definite atonement for the elect, chosen by God, reinforcing the predestinarian framework.

Unlike the Church of England's Article 17, which explicitly names "Predestination and Election" and expands on it pastorally, the First London Confession integrates predestination more concisely into its broader doctrinal statements. Its Calvinistic leanings are evident throughout, especially in Articles 3–6 (on God's decrees and creation) and 21–25 (on salvation), but Article 5 is the clearest starting point for God's eternal purpose in election.

HYPER LINK REFERENCES

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[THE INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION](#)

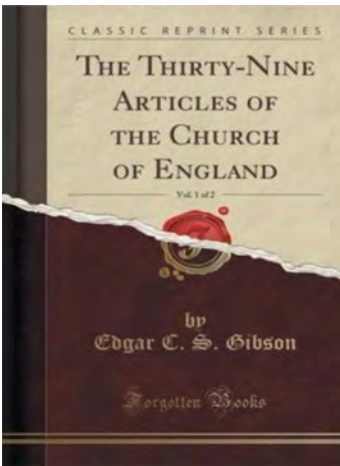


John Calvin first published *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. This initial edition was relatively short. Over the next two decades, Calvin expanded and revised the work multiple times, with the final and most comprehensive edition published in 1559.

The *Institutes* became one of the most influential theological works of the Reformation, systematically outlining Protestant beliefs and Calvin's understanding of Christian doctrine.

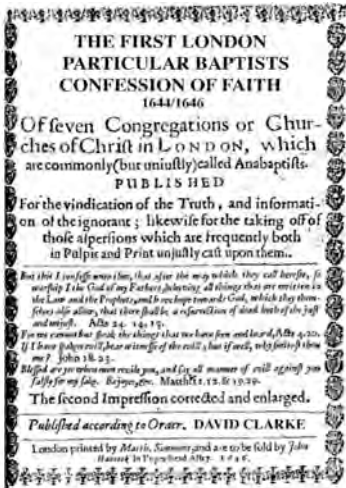
See BOOK 3, Chapter 21.

[THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 39 ARTICLES](#)



The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England were first published in 1563 under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. They were finalized and given official approval in 1571, when clergy were required to subscribe to them. These articles served as the doctrinal foundation of the Church of England, defining its beliefs in relation to Catholicism and emerging Protestant traditions. See ARTICLE 17

THE FIRST LONDON BAPTISTS CONFESSION 1646 SECONED EDITION



III. That God Has Decreed

in Himself from everlasting touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the counsel of His own will, to the glory of His name; in which decree appears His wisdom, constancy, truth, and faithfulness; Wisdom is that whereby He contrives all things; Constancy is that whereby the decree of God remains always immutable; Truth is that whereby He declares that alone which He has decreed, and though His sayings may seem to sound sometimes another thing, yet the sense of them does always agree with the decree;

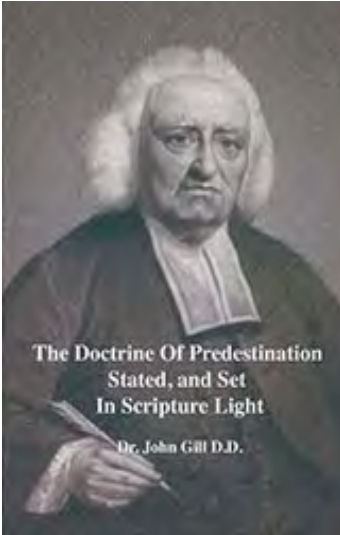
BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS ARTICLES OF RELIGION

The Church I joined in 1976



“The Church” and the said persons believe and pledge themselves to the promulgation and support of the tenets or articles of faith herein after set forth, that is to say, 2. That Before the world began God did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting life and salvation whom He did predestine to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ of his own free grace and according to the good pleasure of His will.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION SET IN SCRIPTURAL LIGHT,



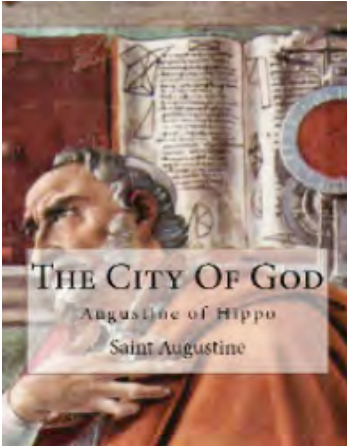
DR. JOHN GILL'S ANSWER TO MR. JOHN WESLEY ON THE SUBJECT OF PREDESTINATION In Opposition to Mr. Wesley's Predestination Calmly Considered, with a Reply to the exceptions of the said writer to The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.

THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL



Martin Luther published *The Bondage of the Will* (De Servo Arbitrio) in 1525. It was a response to *On Free Will* (De Libero Arbitrio), a work by Desiderius Erasmus, in which Erasmus defended human free will. Luther's treatise argued that human will is bound by sin and cannot contribute to salvation, emphasizing God's sovereignty and grace. This work became one of the key theological texts of the Protestant Reformation..

THE CITY OF GOD



Augustine of Hippo wrote *The City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*) between 413 and 426 AD. It was not published all at once but rather in sections over several years. The work was written in response to the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 AD and aimed to defend Christianity against pagan accusations that it had led to Rome's downfall.